AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraphs [024] and [025] with the following amended paragraphs:

[024] FIG. ~~2a~~2A, ~~2b~~2B, ~~2c~~2C and ~~2d~~2D are schematic representations of an image file describing a pattern for a particle explosion effect comprising the red channel for shape description, the green channel for explosion order description, the blue channel for particle spin and the alpha channel for softness description, respectively and ~~. FIG. 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d contains~~ contain photographs;

[025] FIG. ~~3a~~3A, ~~3b~~3B and ~~3c~~3C are schematic representations of the particle shape extraction and triangle separation processes, wherein FIG. ~~3a~~3A is the extraction of one particle from the red component, ~~3b~~3B is the separation of the shape into small triangles and ~~3c~~3C is the storage of the alpha shape of each small triangle in a data file, and wherein ~~.~~FIG. ~~3a~~3A, ~~3b~~3B and ~~3c~~3C contain photographs;

Please replace paragraph [027] with the following amended paragraph:

[027] FIG. 5 is a schematic representation of the particle explosion effect rendering operation and~~. FIG. 5~~ contains photographs; and

Please replace paragraphs [041] to [044] with the following amended paragraphs:

[041] The red channel defines the particle shape. Each particle must be drawn with a different color. Since there are 8 bits per channel, up to 256 particles (28) can be defined. Colors 251 to 254 are reserved for special particles that are called "Background particles". Special behaviors (fade, inverse direction) will be available in the keyframe for these Background particles. Color 255 is reserved for invisible particle. FIG. ~~2a~~ 2A shows an example of the red channel for a shattering glass pattern. Each portion of the shattered glass is drawn in the red channel with a different color.

[042] The green channel defines the explosion sequence. In this channel, each particle

defined in the red channel will be associated with an explosion delay. Delay is represented by a value between 0 and 255. A zero delay will make the particle explode at the beginning of the effect progression, and a 255 delay will make it explode at the end. Intermediate values (between 0 and 255) can be used to define the desired explosion sequence. FIG. ~~2b~~ 2B shows an example of the green channel for a shattering glass pattern. In this case, the closer the average value of the particle of the shattered glass pattern to the center of the image, the faster it will explode.

[043] The blue channel defines the spin. In this channel, a number of rotations done by each particle is represented by a color between 0 and 255. A particle with color 0 will not spin at all and a particle with color 255 will have the maximum spin (for example: 100 rotations). Intermediate values (between 0 and 255) can be used to define the desired spin. FIG. ~~2c~~ 2C shows an example of the blue channel for a shattering glass pattern. Each portion of the shattered glass pattern is given a different color to represent spin.

[044] The alpha channel defines the alpha mask for each particle described in the red channel. This alpha mask is usually used to apply a softness band at the edges of each particle. The alpha range is from 0 to 255. The zero value corresponds to fully invisible and the 255 value corresponds to fully opaque. Usually, a 10 pixels softness width is enough to perform a good anti-aliasing. The softness is made with an alpha gradient from invisible to opaque. This gradient will soften the video source edge with the underneath layer. FIG. ~~2d~~ 2D shows an example of the alpha channel for a shattering glass pattern. Each particle is given an approximate 10 pixel softness band at its edges to ensure that the edges will be soft at explosion. If no softness is given to the edge of the particles, staircase edges will appear on the edges of each particle and will affect the quality of the effect.

Please replace paragraph [048] with the following amended paragraph:

[048] 1. A surface (2048x1024) called "Particle Matte" containing the alpha shape of all

particles divided into small sections of 16x16 pixels and isolated from each other. Two triangles are defined in each 16x16 section. The smaller the triangles are the less unused pixels required for the processing of the image. Two copies of each section are written in the Particle Matte: a copy opaque of the shape extracted from the red channel and a copy with the softness from the alpha channel. FIG. ~~3a~~ 3A shows the first step of this conversion process. A particle is first extracted from the red component. An area encompassing all of its edges is delimited around the particle. FIG. ~~3b~~ 3B shows the separation of the shape into small triangles. Finally, FIG. ~~3c~~ 3C shows the storage of the alpha shape of each small triangle in the particle matte.